

The Tragedy of Hamlet

King. If it be so *Laertes*,
As how should it be so, how otherwise,
Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. My Lord, so you will not ore-rule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace: if he be now returned
As liking not his voyage, and that he meanes
No more to undertake it, I will worke him
To an exploit now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not chuse but fall,
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it accident.

Laer. My Lord I will be rul'd,
The rather if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right:
You have bin talkt of since your travell much,
And that in *Hamlets* hearing, for a quality
Wherein they say you shine; your summe of parts
Did not together plucke such envie from him
As did that one, and that in my regard
Of the unworthiest siege.

Laer. What part is that my Lord?

King. A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needfull too, for youth no lesse becomes
The light and carelesse livery that it weares,
Than fetled age his sables, and his weeds,
Importing health and gravenesse: two months since
Here was a Gentleman of *Normandy*,
I have seene my selfe, and serv'd against the *French*,
And they can well on horse-backe; but this Gallant
Had witch-craft in't, he grew unto his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
As he had bin incorp't and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast; so farre he topt my thought,
That I in forgery of shapes and trickes
Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman was't?

King.

Prince of Denmarke.

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life *Lamord*.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well, he is the brooch indeed,
And gemme of all the Nation.

King. He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your Rapier most especiall,
That he cry'd out, 'twould be a sight indeed
If one could match you; the Scrimers of their nation
He swore had neither motion, guard, nor eye
If you oppos'd them: sir this report of his
Did *Hamlet* so envenome with his envie,
That he could nothing doe, but wish and begge
Your sudden comming ore to play with you.
Now out of this.

Laer. What out of this my Lord?

King. *Laertes*, was your father deare to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why aske you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father,
But that I know love is begun by time,
And that I see in passages of prooffe,
Time qualifies the sparke and fire of it;
There lives within the very flame of love
A kinde of wieke or snuffe that will abate it,
And nothing is at a like goodnesse still;
For goodnesse growing to a pleurisie,
Dies in his owne too much, that we would doe,
We should doe when we would: for this *would* changes,
And hath abatements and delayes as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents,
And then this *Should* is like a spend-thrift sigh,
That hurts by easing: but to the quicke of th'ulcer,
Hamlet comes backe, what would you undertake
To shew your selfe indeed your fathers sonne

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